

What are the outputs of conducting rapid assessment and categorisation?

A list of all informal settlements showing broad categorisation of each one (i.e. A = full upgrade, B1 = interim basic services, B2 = emergency basic services, C = imminent relocation). For each settlement, the rationale/basis for the categorisation should be indicated, as well as the priority developmental interventions and investments required.

A base plan showing locality of all informal settlements, and clearly referenced to the list. This information should preferably be spatially referenced so that it can be included in the municipal and provincial GIS.

A preliminary assessment for each informal settlement that should consist of a short narrative report for each settlement with appended base plans addressing the following aspects:

- *Settlement name, location and size* (estimated number of households/structures) and approximate age of settlement.
- *Contact details* – name and contact details of community leadership, Ward Councillor and ward development committees.
- *Categorisation* – specific categorisation for the settlement and main rationale/reasons for the categorisation given.
- *Developability assessment summary* (preliminary in nature).
- *Priority settlement improvement actions* (short and medium-term).
- *Preliminary technical assessment* covering existing structures, visible infrastructure and social services, estimated settlement density, immediate challenges/needs, obvious emergency threats, land ownership and number of properties, bulk services availability and capacity issues, list of any prior professional work.

Multi-year expenditure projections for informal settlement upgrading showing the rough budgetary requirements for settlements in different categories, the expected grant mechanism, the total cost for each settlement and the disaggregated projection for each over the next three to five years.

Available vacant land (or buildings) within the municipality for potential relocations but only where desktop information permits.

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Working for integration



How can the HDA help you?

As defined in the HDA Act, the HDA provides specific informal settlement upgrading support to provinces and municipalities including technical assistance, capacity building and project development support. Go to www.thehda.co.za to download the full rapid assessment and categorisation guidelines.



Informal settlement upgrading: Rapid assessment and categorisation



The new approach towards informal settlement upgrading

It is now well recognised that there needs to be a radically different approach to addressing the informal settlement challenge in South Africa. The historical approach characterised by a philosophy of 'eradicating' informality and premised on formalisation and the delivery of 'RDP' style housing is unworkable at scale and unsustainable for various reasons. It cannot on its own address the informal settlement 'backlogs' and it often produces a range of negative unintended consequences such as relocations and a loss of livelihoods.

The shift is towards a more rapid, participative and broad-based response led in most instances by the provision of basic services to informal settlements along with basic, functional tenure. Whilst the provision of low-income housing forms part of the overall informal settlement response, it will typically only constitute a small part of the overall delivery given the slow timeframes, high costs and a range of other challenges associated with it.

Why the guidelines?

Rapid assessment and categorisation is central to realising the new approach to informal settlement upgrading. Amongst other things it ensures that all settlements are identified, mapped and assessed, and that relevant and realistic developmental pathways are formulated for each and every settlement. Solutions range from rapid full and conventional upgrading to the rapid provision of basic services as an intermediate measure. Relocations are only undertaken as a last resort and with careful regard for the potential impacts on the livelihoods of residents. The National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP) with the support of the Housing Development Agency (HDA) has been established to give impetus and support to the new approach.

These guidelines will be useful to local municipalities or provincial departments wanting to undertake or commission rapid assessment and categorisation. The guidelines will ensure an adequate understanding of both a) the context, rationale and purposes of rapid assessment and categorisation, as well as b) how it should be undertaken and what outputs are required.

The implementation of the rapid assessment and categorisation process is regarded as the critical first step in implementing improved and more responsive informal settlement upgrading programmes in South Africa, which result in more rapid improvements and investments for all informal settlements.



Why undertake rapid assessment and categorisation?

- To obtain a rapid overview of the locality, scale and nature of informal settlements in a municipality and to better understand the priority needs, constraints and developability of the sites.
- To determine an initial categorisation of all informal settlements in a municipality indicating the appropriate type of developmental response for each one.
- To enable strategic prioritisation of informal settlements for different developmental responses.
- To enable the allocation of budgets for professional services and capital expenditure on multi-year medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEF).
- To provide an essential input necessary to strengthen and/or update the municipality's housing sector plan (HSP) in respect of informal settlements
- To identify priority settlement improvement actions pertaining to basic infrastructure, tenure and housing, as well as broader socio-economic issues and public-realm investments (e.g. education, health care, public transport).

How are rapid assessment and categorisation activities conducted?

- Collection and assessment of available base information.
- Site visits to all informal settlements.
- Interviews/meetings with community leadership.
- Interviews/meetings with municipal officials, personnel from relevant government departments or parastatals with information and professionals with historical involvement.

Rapid assessment and categorisation – the phases

Phase 1: Inception

- Initial meeting with client (usually a local municipality or provincial department of human settlements). Confirm approach, purpose and scope. Finalise assignment implementation plan.

Phase 2: Initial engagement, confirm settlement list and collect base information

- Collect and assess base information including geographical information system (GIS) data sets, site visits and stakeholder engagement.
- Confirm municipal informal settlement list and settlement boundaries.
- Project initiation meeting (first project steering committee - PSC) including key officials and councillors.

Phase 3: GIS plans, site visit and community engagement

- Site visits to every settlement to observe and assess (at a preliminary level) visible information pertaining to geotechnical conditions, environmental constraints, bulk services, social services, topography, land legal issues and the local economy.
- Meetings/interviews with community leadership.
- Draft GIS assessment base plans for each settlement and second PSC meeting.

Phase 4: Settlement-level assessments and categorisation

- Final GIS assessment plans for each settlement showing boundaries, slope analysis, constraints/undevelopable land, property ownership, development potential, existing infrastructure and services (infrastructure and social).

- Municipal base plan showing location and boundaries of all identified informal settlements and other key features such as town centre, movement corridors etc.
- List of categorised settlements and third PSC meeting.

Phase 5: Prioritisation and cash-flows (for MTEF and HSP)

- Prioritisation of the settlements specifying for each one the factors that might suggest prioritisation.
- Cash-flow projections (multi-year) for each project based on categorisation and presumed grant funding sources to be utilised.

Phase 6: Closeout

- Final PSC meeting and closeout report.

Summarised categorisation guideline

1. Full upgrading (category 'A'):

- a. *Developmental pathway:* Rapid formalisation consisting of formal planning approvals, full services, top-structures and formal tenure (e.g. title deeds).
- b. *Rationale:* 1) Site is viable (developable) and appropriate for purposes of formalisation + 2) project is implementation-ready – full upgrading can commence rapidly (typically land secured, feasibilities complete, layout plans approved etc.).

3. Interim basic services (category 'B1'):

- a. *Developmental pathway:* Provision of interim basic services (e.g. sanitation, water, roads, electricity) leading to eventual formalisation (full upgrading).
- b. *Rationale:* 1) Site is viable (developable) and appropriate for purposes of formalisation + 2) project is NOT implementation-ready and imminent (there will be significant delays due to such factors as land acquisition or bulk services provision).

3. Emergency basic services (category 'B2'):

- a. *Developmental pathway:* Provision of emergency basic services (e.g. sanitation, water, fire protection) but NOT leading to eventual formalisation - more likely leading to eventual relocation (when and if a suitable relocations site is obtained and developed).
- b. *Rationale:* 1) Site is NOT viable (developable) and appropriate for purposes of eventual formalisation BUT 2) NO urgent need for relocation - absence of serious health and safety threats (e.g. flooding, slope instability, toxic waste) which cannot be adequately mitigated in the short term (including through emergency/basic services provision).

4. Relocations (category 'C'):

- a. *Developmental pathway:* Rapid relocation to a site which is already available or imminently available.
- b. *Rationale:* 1) Site is NOT viable (developable) and appropriate for purposes of eventual formalisation AND 2) there IS an urgent need for relocation due to serious health and safety threats which cannot be adequately mitigated in the short term (including through basic services provision) AND 3) an appropriate relocations destination is currently or imminently available.

